



LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS  
7500 ODAWA CIRCLE, HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

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TRIBAL COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT NARRATIVE

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**From:** Winnay Wemigwase

**Date:** May 9th and 10th, 2012

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**Re: Tribal Council Q & A in Grand Rapids, Michigan**

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Tribal Council was notified that the LTBB Natural Resources Department was having their Grand Rapids Annual Meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Since the NRD Annual Meeting was set to begin with dinner at 5:00 p.m., it was suggested that Council may want to attend and/or hold a question and answer period earlier, in Grand Rapids, that same day. Several of the Councilors expressed interest in planning a forum and in attending the event, including myself. We decided to set the forum for 1:00 p.m., at the same location as the NRD Meeting.

The Tribal Council Members that were able to attend were Legislative Leader Melvin Kiogima, John Keshick, Belinda Bardwell, Kevin Gasco and me, Winnay Wemigwase. After we all introduced ourselves, Melvin gave a brief introduction about why we came and then handed out the Financial Fact Sheet to every Tribal Citizen in attendance. He led us all through the document, and we answered questions from the Citizens as each topic was addressed. The following bulleted points were notes that I took as we discussed issues and answered questions from the attendees:

- Per Cap increase – comments: some older people may be able to use an increase to help with taxes, health care, etc. However, there are also the social issues that can happen when money is “just handed out.”
- General Welfare: wanted to know what the general welfare portion of the pie chart means. Melvin went into explaining the various sections of the hand out. He referred everyone to page 3 in order to explain the breakdown of services under General Welfare.
- Questions regarding how the Tribe can extend more of the General Welfare programs or funding to Citizens not in the service area. Belinda explained that she has been working on this and has been asking questions. The limitations on funding due to our current sources of “income” was explained.
- Julie Shananaquet arrived and was able to help explain the health services and how/why they work the way that they do. She also assisted with explaining the Donations portion of the budget on page 4.
- We also talked about the hiring of a new grant writer. We currently only have one working for the Tribe.
- Idea about putting something in newsletter or in a separate doc that explains what is available in different areas...i.e. Service Area, Two or Three-County Areas, Out-of-State, etc.
- G.R. Tribal Citizens and Guests: approx. 14 adults, 2 small children
- Government Reps: Kevin Willis, Annette VanDeCar, Doug Craven, Deb Smithkey-Brown, Julie Shananaquet, Tammy Okuly, Winnay Wemigwase, Melvin Kiogima, Kevin Gasco and John Keshick.
- Discussion re: Office of Citizens Legal Services – wanted to know if this office is opening soon and what types of services it may be able to provide for all citizens, no matter where they live.
- Idea brought up about a regional health clinic in G.R. Area by pooling resources with other local tribes.
- Tammy Okuly, Elders Coordinator mentioned that at an Elders Association Meeting, the elders discussed the idea of collaborating among the tribes in Michigan. She also talked

about a survey that she wants elders to fill-out. She also spoke about the next Michigan Indian Elders Association Meeting which is being held in Hannahville.

Overall, the forum was extremely worthwhile and beneficial despite the low attendance. It was a very inspirational and motivational experience to be able to hear, one-on-one and face-to-face, from our fellow citizens about some of what matters to them. It was an effective reminder that, as Tribal Council Members, we have a lot of people who rely on us.